(b) the number of post offices which have been closed in Gujarat during last five years and the reasons therefor, and

(c) whether Department of Posts has any plan to appoint any agent at those places where post offices have been closed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The Department of Posts is classified as a Departmentally run commercial undertaking of the Government of India. Therefore, while it is required to fulfil the Universal Service Obligation of increasing the customers access to basic postal services, it is also expected to be financially self-sufficient. This is clearly spelt out in the policy directives of the Tenth Five year Plan.

(d) Details of Post Offices closed down in Gujarat during the last five years along with reasons is given below:

Year	Post Offices closed	Reasons for closure
2000-01	01	Non-payment of Non-Recoverable Component
2001-02	05	Non-payment of Non-Recoverable Component
2002-03	01	Non-payment of Non-Recoverable Component
2003-04	Nil	Not applicable
2004-05	Nil	Not applicable

(c) The Department has plans to provide postal services through more cost effective means, including through franchised agents. However, implementation of such schemes will depend on the parameters fixed for appointment of such agents, selection of location etc. under the scheme.

Provision of rural telephones in Gujarat

†1898. SHRI JAYANTILAL BAROT:
SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that rural telephones are not being made available by private phone companeis (Basic Operators) in certain districts of Gujarat;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard;

(c) if not the reasons therefor; and

(d) the name of the villages where such a facility is not available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The Access Services are being provided by private companies under Unified Access Service/Cellular Mobile Telephone Service License. Roll-out obligation stipulates 90% coverage of 50% District Head Quarters (DHQs) or any town in lieu thereof. There is no mandatory roll-out obligation for rural coverage in these licences. The expansion of rural telecommunication facilities is envisaged through Universal Service Obligation Fund.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) to (c) above.

Funds allocated for telecom circle in Maharashtra

1899. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:
SHRI BALAVANT ALIAS BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the funds allocated for providing telecom services in Maharashtra for each of the last three years and current financial year, district-wise;

(b) whether the telecom circles have achieved their targets;

(c) if so, the details thereof including the expenditure incurred thereon;

(d) if not the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when the target is likely to be achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The details of funds allotment in Maharashtra for the last three years and current financial year are as under: